



Harford County's Guide to Senior Caregiving



Barry Glassman
Harford County Executive

Amber Shrodes
Director
Dept. of Community Services

Office on Aging

Harford County Department of Community Services
www.harfordcountymd.gov/services 410.638.3025



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This document is also available online at www.harfordcountymd.gov/services/guide.cfm

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Does My Loved One Need Help?



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Seeing changes for the worse in the wellbeing of a loved one is never easy.

Sometimes it is easy to miss these changes because they can be so gradual and at other times, the change may seem so out of the ordinary that it is easy to excuse it as an "off day." So how do you tell when there is cause for concern? What are the red flags? The following are warning signs to keep in mind as you assess your loved one's needs:

My loved one:

Growing health concerns:

- ☐ Experiencing new or serious health concerns
- ☐ Seems more frequently ill
- ☐ Taking much longer to bounce back from illnesses
- ☐ Showing signs that they are not taking medication properly

Injuries and/or falls:

- ☐ Experiencing more frequent falls
- ☐ Increasing amount of other injuries, such as bruises, cuts and/or burns

Changes in personality:

- ☐ Noticing severe mood swings, agitation, depression, outbursts
- ☐ Noticing withdrawn or paranoid behavior that is atypical

A change in personal hygiene:

- ☐ Failing to bathe, not brushing their teeth/dentures
- ☐ Hair is uncombed or unclean
- ☐ Clothes are soiled
- ☐ Noticing body odor

Decreased mobility or increased frailty:

- ☐ Having increased concerns with balance and mobility

A change in interpersonal relationships:

- ☐ Avoiding friends and family
- ☐ Isolating themselves from others

Other changes in appearance:

- ☐ Experiencing weight loss
- ☐ Skipping meals
- ☐ Experiencing lack of appetite or other significant changes in eating habits

A change in social interactions:

- ☐ Becomes antisocial when normally outgoing
- ☐ Disinterested in things that they once looked forward to doing

Financial concerns:

- ☐ Bills are going unpaid or overpaid
- ☐ Large unexplained withdrawals or expenditures
- ☐ Money is missing or hidden around the home

Forgetfulness:

- ☐ Frequently forgetting or mistaking medications
- ☐ Missing appointments
- ☐ Money is missing or hidden around the home

Helpful Links:

www.harfordcountymd.gov/services/aging

www.eldercare.gov/ELDERCARE.NET/Public/Resources/Factsheets/Ten_Warning_Signs.aspx



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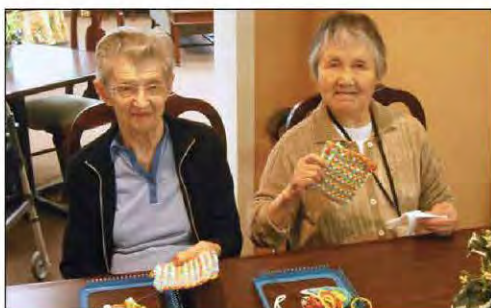
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How Much Care Does Your Loved One Need?

COMMUNITY BASED CARE



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Often being able to take care of all of a loved one's needs in their normal environment is feasible, but there are times when that is not in the best interest of both caregiver and care recipient.

Community Based Care is one option for care that allows a loved one to maintain their current living situation. It is a good option to build upon existing family supports but the services provided are limited. The two categories of community based care to consider are in-home care and adult day care.

Home Care is provided where a patient lives and should be provided by licensed and insured care provider or agency.

OR

Adult Day Care provides assistance and supervision during the day. The two types are: adult social day care and adult day medical care.

My loved one:

- ☐ Needs short term care after an acute illness
- ☐ Requires home health care such as nursing or wound care
- ☐ Needs assistance with physical, occupational or speech therapy
- ☐ Needs help bathing/personal care
- ☐ Requires assistance with transportation to physician/shopping
- ☐ Needs help with chore services such as laundry, vacuuming or light housework
- ☐ Needs assistance with meal preparation
- ☐ Requires monitoring of medication

My loved one:

- ☐ Has a primary caregiver who is outside home regularly and needs respite support
- ☐ Must have supervision and/or assistance to ensure safety
- ☐ Needs support with meals and snacks
- ☐ Requires assistance with medications, routine monitoring of health conditions (blood pressure, diabetes)
- ☐ Needs physical, occupational and/or speech therapy
- ☐ Requires supervision to avoid wandering
- ☐ Needs help with socialization

If you checked any of the items above and feel that adding these supports would meet your loved one's needs when combined with family and other supports, home care or adult day care may be a good option for your loved one.

If you find that one or a combination of the options above is not sufficient to meet their needs, you may need to consider assisted living or nursing home placement. Keep reading for more information on these care options.

Helpful Links: www.harfordcountymd.gov/services/aging
www.caregiverslibrary.org/caregivers-resources/grp-home-care
www.eldercare.gov/eldercare.net/public/resources/factsheets/home_health_care.aspx
www.mayoclinic.com/health/adult-day-service/MY01938



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- COMPANIONSHIP
- RESPITE CARE - HOURLY, DAILY, WEEKLY
- VACATION CARE (AT HOME OR TRAVEL WITH YOU)
- TRANSPORTATION TO APPOINTMENTS
- RNs, LPNs, CNAs, & HOMEMAKER/COMPANIONS



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Choosing a Professional In-Home Caregiver



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In-home elder caregivers can be tasked with a variety of functions. Some functions are geared towards meeting social or personal needs while others are focused on medical or healthcare needs. Once you have determined which level of care and specific needs an in-home caregiver will be responsible for helping your loved one with, use the checklist below to interview potential candidates for this position.



For an Agency:

- ☐ If with an agency, how long have they been in business?
- ☐ Is the agency evaluated and accredited?
- ☐ Is the agency licensed by the state?
- ☐ Can the agency provide references?
- ☐ How does the agency protect client confidentiality?
- ☐ Is the agency inspected by any outside organization?
- ☐ How are caregivers supervised?
- ☐ Is the agency certified by Medicare?

For an Individual:

- ☐ Why have you chosen to caregive for the elderly?
- ☐ Are you comfortable with assisting with bathroom issues or other bodily needs?
- ☐ Can you lift the elder, if needed, without risk of harming yourself?
- ☐ What job-relevant training do you have?
- ☐ Do you have a CNA, LPN, or RN license?
- ☐ Are you certified by the National Association for Home Care and Hospice?
- ☐ Can you provide a list of references?

Helpful Links:

www.harfordcountymd.gov/services/aging
www.AgingCare.com



Choosing a Professional In-Home Caregiver



Harford County Department
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Office On Aging

Tips for Hiring and Employing an In-home Caregiver:

- ☐ Write a job description that lists all of the functions you will want the caregiver to fulfill.
- ☐ Gather and interview candidates based on the qualifications specified in the job description, ie. skills, knowledge, experience, etc.
- ☐ Narrow your candidate list down to one or two candidates, perform background checks once having their signed authorization to do so.
- ☐ Choose your final candidate, and offer them the job in writing via a contract. Be ready for negotiations.
- ☐ When the caregiver accepts employment, begin the training process. Spend a few days with them to familiarize them with your loved one and their preferences.
- ☐ Show up unannounced sporadically to make sure that tasks are being performed.
- ☐ If possible, ask your loved one questions to determine if they are satisfied with the care being provided.
- ☐ Meet with the caregiver regularly.
- ☐ Provide the caregiver with performance evaluations to maintain expectations and performance.



Responsibilities of an In-home Caregiver:

- ☐ **Social / interpersonal tasks.** Spending time with your loved one, talking, listening, socializing, assisting with transportation to appointments.
- ☐ **Everyday upkeep of household operation.** Planning and preparing meals, cleaning, laundry, changing bed linens.
- ☐ **Healthcare / medical needs tasks.** Assisting with using the toilet, helping with bathing and dressing, assisting with mobility, administering medications, treating a wound or changing bandage.

Helpful Links:

www.harfordcountymd.gov/services/aging
www.AgingCare.com



Where To Turn If Community Based Care Is Not Enough: Assisted Living Facilities and Nursing Homes



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Office On Aging



Assisted Living Facilities provide a housing alternative for frail adults who require help with dressing, bathing, eating, toileting, and overall supervision but do not require skilled nursing care.

Short term stays are an option if the regular caregiver requires respite. Assisted Living Facilities can vary greatly in the number of residents they serve. Some are home environments with just a few residents and others can be quite large where residents have their own apartment-like living area. Use the list below to determine if assisted living is right for your loved one.

My loved one:

- ☐ Needs 24 hour supervision
- ☐ Does not need intense medical care/support
- ☐ Needs assistance with bathing and dressing
- ☐ Requires assistance with toileting or incontinence concerns
- ☐ Needs preparation of meals and/or assistance with eating
- ☐ Requires assistance in managing/taking medication
- ☐ Is able to ambulate but may need assistance
- ☐ Needs assistance with household chores/laundry

Helpful Links:

www.harfordcountymd.gov/services/aging

www.eldercare.gov/ELDERCARE.NET/Public/Resources/Factsheets/Assisted_Living.aspx

www.eldercare.gov/eldercare.net/public/resources/topic/Nursing_Home.aspx



Where To Turn If Community Based Care Is Not Enough: Assisted Living Facilities and Nursing Homes



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In cases where needs exceed the capability of an assisted living facility, or skilled nursing is required, nursing home placement may be required.

The decision to place a loved one in a nursing home is one of the most difficult many make, but with open communication and thoughtful consideration, a decision that is in the best interest of everyone involved can be reached. If considering nursing home placement, it is likely that serious concerns for a loved one's wellbeing are being noticed. Use the list below to determine if nursing home placement is right for your loved one.

My loved one:

- ☐ Has a chronic or acute illness or medical condition that requires 24 hour skilled nursing care
- ☐ Is debilitated and medically unstable
- ☐ Is unable to ambulate on their own
- ☐ Frequently falls, is injured or is at risk of self harm
- ☐ Has experienced cognitive decline or dementia leading to frequent wandering or agitation
- ☐ Is unable to feed themselves; reliant upon medical interventions for nutrition/hydration



Helpful Links:

www.harfordcountymd.gov/services/aging

www.eldercare.gov/ELDERCARE.NET/Public/Resources/Factsheets/Assisted_Living.aspx

www.eldercare.gov/eldercare.net/public/resources/topic/Nursing_Home.aspx



KEEPING THE PEACE: *Tips for Sibling Family Caregivers*



Harford County Department
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Office On Aging

Caregiving involves many challenging decisions, from choosing an in-home aide to finding a nursing home and resolving end-of-life issues. Communication among family members is the key to providing the best care for your older relative. Here are a few tips for successful family meetings:

- ☐ **Come prepared.**
Bring notes on what you would like to discuss; bring information about programs and services you are considering.
- ☐ **Respect feelings and wishes.**
Your relative may be struggling to maintain his/her independence and dignity despite failing health.
- ☐ **Gather facts.**
Research your loved one's options – can he/she afford assisted living, a nursing home, etc.?
- ☐ **Listen to others.**
Viewpoints may differ, but consider everyone's opinions and don't accuse or attack each other; use "I" statements to express feelings.
- ☐ **Divide responsibilities.** Everyone should have an assignment to avoid feelings of resentment.
- ☐ **Consider professional guidance.**
A professional case manager, mediator or social worker can help run the meeting if tensions are running high in the family.
- ☐ **Plan a follow-up meeting.**
Hold an additional meeting two to three months following the primary meeting, to evaluate the plan and make any necessary changes.
- ☐ **Take notes.**
To allow for clarity after the meeting and to provide focus for future action, have someone, preferably a family member, take notes during the meetings.

Free Mediation Services are available for families and care providers who may need help with decision-making, conflicts or guardianship issues. Mediation is voluntary, confidential and the mediators are neutral. For more information contact The Harford County Community Mediation Program at 410-638-4807 or visit www.harfordmediation.org.

Helpful Links:

www.harfordcountymd.gov/services/aging
www.AgingCare.com



KEEPING THE PEACE: *Tips for Sibling Family Caregivers*

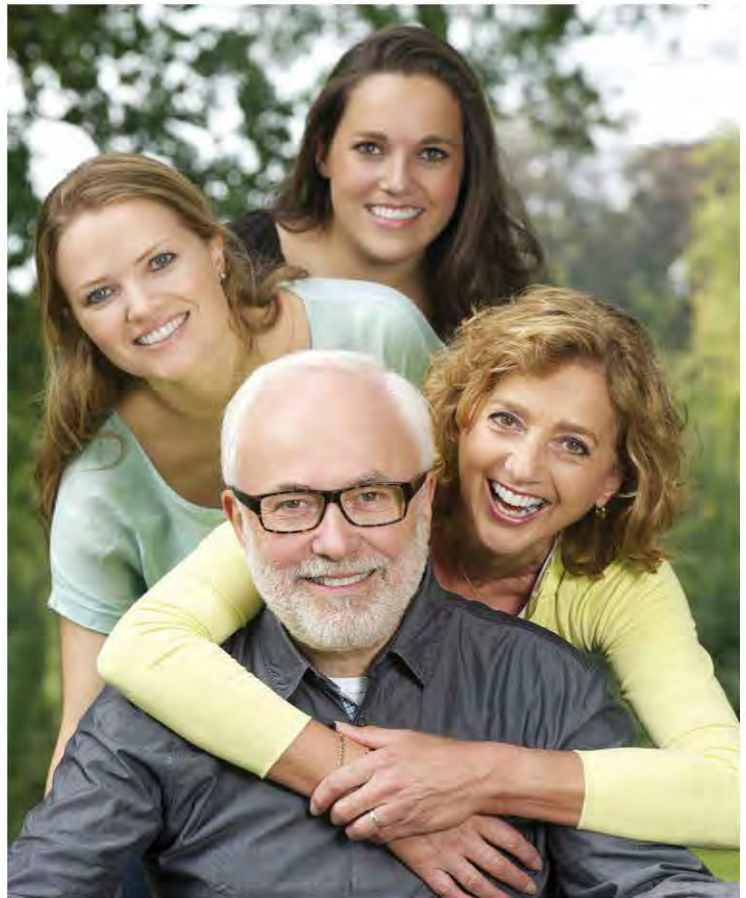


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Here are a few key tips in handling a family meeting:

8 Important Talking Points to Include in a Family Meeting

1. Your loved one's up-to-date medical report.
2. Loved one's wants and needs with regards to care and support from the family.
3. Where a loved one will live (i.e. in their home, with another family member, in assisted living).
4. Cost of care and how costs will be covered.
5. What the primary caregiver needs from the family in regards to assistance and support.
6. How much time each family member has to visit or care for a loved one.
7. Additional resources available to assist the primary caregiver.
8. Allow time for each family member to voice their opinions about the situation.



Remember, despite your best efforts to keep the peace, the challenges involved in planning, paying for, and carrying out your loved one's care may still cause division.

Helpful Links:

www.harfordcountymd.gov/services/aging
www.AgingCare.com



Legal Checklist for Caregivers



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Keeping track of mom and dad's legal affairs is a big responsibility.

Here are some tips that may help in protecting yourself and your loved one.

☐ **Have the right documents.**

In addition to a will, your loved one will need a health care power of attorney (POA) and a power of attorney for financial decisions. Visit www.caregiverslibrary.org/Portals/0/ChecklistsandForms_CaregiverDocumentOrganizer.pdf for a "Caregiver's Document Organizer."

☐ **Organize Important Papers.**

Put papers such as birth and marriage certificates, power of attorney, deeds to property and cemetery plots, insurance policies and pension benefits into files that are easy to navigate. Visit www.caregiverslibrary.org/Portals/0/ChecklistsandForms_SampleFilingSystem.pdf for a "Sample Filing System."

☐ **Make a Family Plan.**

Ensure that your loved one has put in writing who will be responsible for each part of caregiving. Have each family member sign the document.

☐ **Explore Public Benefits.**

These include Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) disability programs, Medicare and Medicaid, to name a few. Visit the AARP Foundation's online tool, Benefits QuickLINK (www.benefitscheckup.org/cf/index.cfm?partner_id=22) to see if your loved one qualifies for government programs.

☐ **Research Life Insurance Deals and Tax Breaks.**

Your loved one may be able to claim federal deductions for many medical expenses. Determine whether your family member has a life insurance policy that allows for accelerated death payments to help with long-term care.

☐ **Think Beyond Your Loved One.**

There may be others depending on mom or dad, such as an adult child with special needs, a surviving spouse, or even a pet. You may need to claim responsibility for their care as well; make sure benefits are in place for other dependants and a plan for pets is set aside in the will.

For more caregiving tools, visit AARP's Caregiving Resource Center at www.aarp.org/home-family/caregiving/.

Helpful Links:

www.harfordcountymd.gov/services/aging
www.aarp.org/home-family/caregiving/info-12-2012/legal-checklist-for-caregivers.html or
www.aarp.org/home-family/caregiving/

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What Important Documents Should a Caregiver Have?



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Nothing will slow your progress or frustrate you more as a caregiver than searching for documents or finding that they don't exist. It is critical to compile these and ensure that they are safe and accessible only to those who require access to them. Here is a helpful checklist of important documents you will probably need in your journey as a caregiver.

Vital Records:

- ☐ Birth Certificate(s)
 - ___ Loved one's
 - ___ Spouse(s)
- ☐ Social Security Cards/ Documents
- ☐ Death Certificate(s)
 - ___ Spouse(s)
 - ___ Children(s)
- ☐ Marriage License(s)
- ☐ Divorce Decree(s)
- ☐ Military Records/DD214
- ☐ Citizenship Papers (if appropriate)
- ☐ Adoption Papers (if any)

Legal Documents & Records:

- ☐ Will
 - ___ Loved one's
 - ___ Spouse's
- ☐ Trust Documents
 - ___ Living Trust
- ☐ Letter of Instructions (Instructions from your loved one for family upon their passing)

Health Related Documents:

- ☐ Durable Healthcare Power of Attorney
- ☐ Living Will
- ☐ Do Not Resuscitate Order if desired
- ☐ Medicare/Insurance Cards or copies
- ☐ Advanced Directives (Maryland Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment)*
- ☐ Current list of all healthcare providers
- ☐ Current list of all medications

Helpful Links: www.harfordcountymd.gov/services/aging

***Maryland Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment Form:**

www.marylandmolst.org/docs/Health%20Care%20Decision%20Making%20Worksheet.pdf

General guide to advanced planning: www.caringinfo.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3284



What Important Documents Should a Caregiver Have?



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Financial Documents:

(To apply for Long Term Care Medical Assistance, you will need 5 years of bank statements at a minimum along with the other documents listed below.)

- ☐ Financial Power of Attorney
- ☐ Bank account numbers and locations
- ☐ Bank statements
- ☐ Mortgage documents
- ☐ Vehicle titles
- ☐ List of assets
 - ___ Savings
 - ___ Retirement accounts
 - ___ Pension Documents
 - ___ Life insurance information/contacts
 - ___ Investments/Annuities
 - ___ Stocks
 - ___ Property Owned
 - ___ Sources of income
- ☐ List and location of debts
 - ___ Loans
 - ___ Credit Cards
- ☐ Location and access to safe deposit box
- ☐ Most recent tax return

End of Life:

- ☐ Funeral pre-arrangements
- ☐ Cemetery deed(s)
- ☐ Church/clergy person contacts

Other:

- ☐ List of user names and passwords for online access to personal accounts



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Maryland guide to advanced directives:
www.oag.state.md.us/Healthpol/adirective.pdf

About Power of Attorney in Maryland:
www.peoples-law.org/node/739

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200 Booth Street, Elkton, MD

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Forgetfulness or Something More?



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What is dementia? It is the deterioration of a person's ability to think, remember and reason. It may cause changes in personality, mood and behavior. A person with dementia may have difficulty using common objects, finding the right words and following directions.

Dementia is not a disease, but a set of symptoms common to certain diseases. Alzheimer's, Lou Gehrig's (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis – ALS) and Parkinson's disease are among the many conditions which cause dementia. The mental impairment gets worse over time; individuals in the later stages may wander from home, forget to eat, and lose the ability to care for their most basic needs. Some conditions, such as depression, thyroid disorders, poor nutrition, infections, alcoholism and medication reactions may cause dementia-like symptoms; in these cases, proper diagnosis and treatment may be able to reverse the symptoms.

Helpful Links:

www.harfordcountymd.gov/services/aging
www.dementia.com



Forgetfulness or Something More?



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Use the following to identify early signs and symptoms.

- ☐ Daily disruption of life due to frequent memory loss.
- ☐ Difficulty with problem-solving and planning.
- ☐ Problems with everyday tasks.
- ☐ Losing sense of time or place.
- ☐ Challenges with perception, images and special relationships.
- ☐ Struggling with communicating through speaking or writing.
- ☐ Frequently misplacing objects.
- ☐ Changes in judgement or decision-making.
- ☐ Withdrawal from social situations.
- ☐ Lack of interest in hobbies, activities, work, projects or sports.
- ☐ Changes in mood or personality.

Ten tips for talking to someone with dementia.

1. Eliminate distractions (radio, fans, television, etc.)
2. Be patient and resist the urge to finish their sentences.
3. Acknowledge physical indicators. Pay attention to body language to determine mood.
4. Don't underestimate the power of conversation, even if communication is limited.
5. Experiment with different types of communication (pointing, demonstrating, visual clues, etc.).
6. Keep conversations on a one-on-one basis as much as possible.
7. Limit conversations; short, simple and to the point.
8. Try living in their reality; provide support and validation to their beliefs as long as it isn't hurting anyone.
9. Steer clear of conflict. Arguing and debating will only cause agitation.
10. Maintain eye contact and speak directly; get their attention by using their name.

For more information or complete checklists:

www.caregiverslibrary.org/Portals/0/ChecklistsandForms_HomeModificationChecklist.pdf



Forgetfulness or Something More?

SAFETY TIPS



Harford County Department
of Community Services
Office On Aging

Safety Tips:

- ☐ Store sharp objects and toxic substances out of the person's reach.
- ☐ Develop a reminder system for medications. If a person lives alone, he/she may forget to take their medications – use a medication organizer or unit dose packs, write notes or call at medication times.
- ☐ Keep daily routines as consistent as possible. Plan a predictable schedule for meal, bath and bed times.
- ☐ Simple activities like dressing or brushing teeth may become difficult. Break activities into small steps and give verbal instructions, one at a time. Gently redirect the person if he or she becomes upset. You may be able to distract the person by taking a walk or offering a favorite activity.
- ☐ If the person can no longer cook, consider Meals on Wheels or hire someone to help with meal preparation.
- ☐ Use safety gates and lock doors to rooms that can be dangerous.
- ☐ Close supervision is required for people who wander outside the home. Obtain an identification bracelet from the Alzheimer's Association's Safe Return Program (1-800-443-2273).
- ☐ Write down appointments and other events on a large calendar, and keep a log of visits from family and other helpers, which you can review with your relative.
- ☐ Report significant changes in behavior to the doctor; these may indicate health problems which the person cannot communicate.



Helpful Links:

www.harfordcountymd.gov/services/aging
www.dementia.com



Is My Loved One at Risk for Mismanaging Their Medications?



Harford County Department
of Community Services
Office On Aging

Medication mishaps are a leading cause of hospitalization and fall related injuries among older adults. Half of the older adult population takes at least three medications daily and this does not include vitamins, supplements and over the counter medications. Keeping an up to date medication list and always using the same pharmacy are key ways to prevent problems. How can you reduce the risk of medication mishaps as a caregiver? Consider whether your loved one has the following risk factors that contribute to medication related problems and consider the suggested solutions to prevent them.

My loved one has:

Vision Problems which may include:

- ☐ Inability to read labels for type of medication or dosage instructions.
- ☐ Inability to discern the color or shape of pills when taking medication.
- ☐ Inability to read warning labels for precautions and side effects.
- ☐ Inability to see or find dropped medications.
- ☐ Inability to read expiration dates on medications.

Solutions: Ask for large print labels and instructions. Set up a pill organizer for your loved one and check it regularly. Keep an up to date list of medications and what they are used for and frequently check to see if medications are expired.

Memory Loss/Confusion which could contribute to:

- ☐ Failure to remember to take medications.
- ☐ Inability to remember when medications were taken.
- ☐ Inability to remember where medications are located.
- ☐ Uncertainty about time of day/night.

Solution: Look for a pill organizer that matches your loved one's medication routine. There are organizers that are designed for daily medications but also those that are set up for morning, afternoon and evening medication schedules.

Hearing Loss:

- ☐ Inability to hear a physician/pharmacist's directions on how to take medication.
- ☐ Reluctance to ask questions due to inability to properly hear responses.

Solution: Ask for physicians/pharmacist to write down special instructions or arrange to speak to them or to attend medical appointments with your loved one as possible.

Swallowing Problems:

- ☐ Swallowing problems and dry mouth which can lead to failure to take medication.

Solution: Patients should not crush or break up pills which may damage the integrity and effectiveness of the medication. Talk to your loved one's physician to see if the medication can be safely crushed or if there are other ways the medication can be provided.

Financial Concerns:

- ☐ High prescription copays and limited incomes.

Solution: It is not usual for seniors to forgo getting prescriptions filled if they are too costly. Others may try taking less than prescribed to make the prescription last longer. Talk to physicians about generics, samples or prescription assistance programs that assist with costs. You may also wish to contact the State Health Insurance Program at 410-638-3577.

Helpful Links: www.harfordcountymd.gov/services/aging

Guide to preventing medication mishaps:
www.caregiver.va.gov/pdfs/Preventing_Medication_Mishaps.pdf



How Does My Loved One Dispose of Medications Safely and Properly?



Harford County Department
of Community Services
Office On Aging

Safe Disposal Guidelines for Medications - A Few Small Steps Can Make an Important Difference in Safeguarding Lives and the Environment.

Follow medication providers' instructions and use all medications as instructed. If you do not use all prescribed or over-the-counter medication, you can take a few small steps to make an impact in safeguarding lives and protecting the environment by disposing of unused medicines properly:

- 1) DO NOT FLUSH* unused medications and DO NOT POUR them down a sink or drain.
- 2) Be proactive and dispose of unused medication in household trash. When discarding unused medications, ensure you protect children and pets from potentially negative effects:
 - a) *Pour medication into a sealable plastic bag. If medication is a solid (pill, liquid capsule, etc.), crush it or add water to dissolve it.*
 - b) *Add kitty litter, sawdust, coffee grounds (or any material that mixes with the medication and makes it less appealing for pets and children to eat) to the plastic bag.*
 - c) *Seal the plastic bag and put it in the trash.*
 - d) *Remove and destroy ALL identifying personal information (prescription label) from all medication containers before recycling them or throwing them into the trash.*
- 3) Check for approved state and local collection programs, such as Prescription Drug Take Back Days (contact the Harford County Office of Drug Control Policy at 410-638-3333 for more information). Another option is to check for approved state and local collection alternatives such as community based household hazardous waste collection programs.

** Flush prescription drugs down the toilet only if the label or accompanying patient information specifically instructs doing so.*



Helpful Links: www.harfordcountymd.gov/services/aging

Guide to prescription disposal:

www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/publications/pdf/prescrip_disposal.pdf

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Is it Time for Your Loved One to Give Up the Keys?



Harford County Department
of Community Services
Office On Aging

The ability to drive is one we often take for granted but that we hold tightly to as it permits independence and autonomy.

There may come a time when you feel that your loved one's ability to drive safely is compromised.

Approaching the subject is difficult but how can you tell if it is time for this discussion?

Use the following checklist as a guideline.

My loved one:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Seems unusually uneasy when driving or when driving at night or in bad weather | <input type="checkbox"/> Is unable to maintain speed, stay in lane or perform routine driving functions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drives either too quickly or too slowly | <input type="checkbox"/> Has frequent near misses while driving |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Is slow to respond to signals, stop signs or hazards in the road | <input type="checkbox"/> Has difficulty with response time and/or coordination |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Has failed to obey traffic signs or signals | <input type="checkbox"/> Has had illnesses where a doctor has cautioned against driving |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Has significant change or decline in vision, hearing or mobility | <input type="checkbox"/> Takes medication that clearly cautions against driving while taking the prescription |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Has become disoriented or lost on familiar routes | <input type="checkbox"/> Confuses brake and accelerator |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Has had warnings or tickets due to poor driving | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Has caused an accident | |

No one of the items above alone are necessarily an indicator that your loved one can no longer drive; you may want to consider alternate transportation or have a talk with your loved one. Here are some tips to consider:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> See their physician and discuss these concerns to see if they can be addressed/resolved | <input type="checkbox"/> Look for options to decrease the need to drive such as riding with friends, or using public transportation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Limit driving time to short distances or only in daytime hours if appropriate | <input type="checkbox"/> Talk to your loved one's pharmacist to see if medications could be at the core of the concern and what might be done to address this. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Have vision and hearing tests to help assess capability | |

Helpful Links:

www.harfordcountymd.gov/services/aging

www.caring.com/articles/when-should-seniors-stop-driving



Choosing an Adult Day Care



Harford County Department
of Community Services
Office On Aging

When trying to find the right Adult Day Care Center for your loved one, you want to make sure they will be happy, safe and well attended. Adult Day Care can be the answer. Determining the correct facility will give you peace of mind and can aid caregivers and family in maintaining their personal well being as well. The following checklist will help guide you in choosing the best Adult Day Care Center that will meet your needs, as well as those of your loved one:

Location and Finding The Right Center

- ☐ Is the center in proximity to family, friends, and other caregivers?
- ☐ Is transportation available?
- ☐ Is there an extra charge for transportation?
- ☐ How do I find a center? Check with family doctor, local social services or health department, mental health centers, local Office on Aging.

Facility Information

- ☐ How long has the facility been in business?
- ☐ Is the facility licensed by the State Health Department or Department of Social Services?
- ☐ Has the State Health Department received any substantiated complaints about the care provided in the facility?
- ☐ Do I feel welcome when I visit the facility?

Financial Information

- ☐ What days and hours is the facility open?
- ☐ What happens if I am running late or need to drop off my loved one early?
- ☐ How is the participant charged; hourly, daily, or weekly?
- ☐ Is there a minimum amount of time that needs to be committed to, i.e. 3 days a week?
- ☐ Is financial assistance available?
- ☐ What is included in the cost, activities, meals, transportation, etc.?
- ☐ What is the adult-to-staff ratio?
- ☐ How do they insure safety?
- ☐ How are behavioral problems handled?

Helpful Links:

www.harfordcountymd.gov/services/aging
www.AgingCare.com



Choosing an Adult Day Care



Harford County Department
of Community Services
Office On Aging



Level of Care: Does the Facility Accept Attendees Who:

- ☐ Are incontinent?
- ☐ Are in wheelchairs?
- ☐ Have memory loss?
- ☐ Have difficulties in speaking?
- ☐ Wander?
- ☐ Have special dietary requirements?
- ☐ Have behavioral problems?

Myths About Adult Day Care Facilities:

- ☐ It's an overestimated baby-sitting service for seniors.
- ☐ All attendees and participants are mentally, physically or emotionally challenged.
- ☐ All activities are preplanned and participants cannot deviate from the schedule.
- ☐ Caregivers are not able to participate.
- ☐ Adult Day Care replaces and can make up for everyday attention by caregivers.

Helpful Links:

www.harfordcountymd.gov/services/aging
www.AgingCare.com



Warning Signs of Financial Exploitation



Harford County Department
of Community Services
Office On Aging

Financial exploitation of seniors is often referred to as the silent crime that goes unreported because the victims are not aware that they are being taken advantage of or are too embarrassed to report what has occurred.

Financial exploitation is the wrongful taking or use of vulnerable person's funds or property through fraud, theft, predatory lending or scams. Current estimates put the overall reporting of financial exploitation at only 1 in 25 cases, suggesting that there are at least 5 million financial abuse victims each year.

My loved one:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawals of large amounts of cash or frequent checks made out to "cash" | <input type="checkbox"/> Has more credit cards in your loved one's name; with another person's name added to accounts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cannot find credit cards or identification cards | <input type="checkbox"/> Makes sudden changes to will or other financial/legal documents |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Has had valuable objects from the home disappear | <input type="checkbox"/> Has a new friend, interested person or uninvolved relative |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Is uneasy discussing financial concerns | <input type="checkbox"/> Has signatures on financial documents that look unusual or forged |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Has had new names appear on bank accounts | <input type="checkbox"/> Enters into offerings or provisions of costly services they do not need |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Receives unpaid bills or insufficient funds notices | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No longer receives mail related to money issues | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mentions entering contests, lotteries or receiving suspicious calls asking for money | |

What to do if you suspect financial exploitation:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Attempt to talk to your loved one gently about your concerns | <input type="checkbox"/> Compile any and all documentation you can related to your suspicions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contact your loved one's banking institutions and share your concerns | <input type="checkbox"/> Report your suspicion to appropriate authorities; local law enforcement, State's Attorney's Office, Adult Protective Services, or Office on Aging |

Helpful Links: www.harfordcountymd.gov/services/aging

www.harfordcountymd.gov/statesattorney

www.aging.maryland.gov/documents/safe.pdf

www.ncea.aoa.gov/Resources/Publication/docs/NCEA_ProtectYourself_508.pdf



How to Make Mom/Dad's Home Safer



Harford County Department
of Community Services
Office On Aging

There are often simple changes that can make it more comfortable and safe for your loved one to remain in their current living situation. Consider these options and supports:

- ☐ Take a good safety inventory of your loved one's living space. Look for trip hazards, clear away clutter, assure good lighting, verify smoke detectors are working and address necessary home repairs and security risks.
- ☐ Medical equipment such as a wheelchair, shower bench, cane or bedside toilet can ease mobility and address personal care limitations.
- ☐ Home modifications such as a ramp, guardrails and grab bars allow for safety and promote independence.
- ☐ Medical alert systems such as personal alarms/telephone assurance provide extra reassurance and peace of mind for both caregiver and care recipient.
- ☐ Home delivered meal programs assist with providing proper nutrition while minimizing the danger of burns and cuts.

General Home Safety Tips

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Establish a medical alert or a buddy system. | <input type="checkbox"/> Make sure all rails for stairs inside and outside the house are sturdy. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Keep a fire extinguisher and smoke detector handy. | <input type="checkbox"/> Use proper and bright lighting in all high traffic areas. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Choose proper fitting shoes with low heels. | <input type="checkbox"/> Make sure that all staircases have good lighting with switches easily accessible. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Use a correctly measured walking aid. | <input type="checkbox"/> Use non-slip materials on all staircases. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Remove or tack down all scatter rugs. | <input type="checkbox"/> Make sure front and back doors have dead bolts. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Remove electrical or telephone cords from traffic areas. | <input type="checkbox"/> Post emergency numbers by all phones. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Avoid using slippery cleaning products on floors. | <input type="checkbox"/> Set thermostat on water heater at 120 degrees or below. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wipe up spills immediately. | <input type="checkbox"/> Keep lamp or flashlight near bed. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Avoid standing on ladders or chairs. | |

Helpful Links:

www.harfordcountymd.gov/statesattorney

www.caregiverslibrary.org/Portals/0/ChecklistsandForms_HomeModificationChecklist.pdf

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